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E.O. 11652, Sec. 3(E) and 5(D) or (E)
State Dept. Ltr. 1/23/73
By JK NARS, Date 2/27/73

HILSMAN CABLE 50

Action
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Info

Control: 25260
Rec'd: AUGUST 30, 1963
7:38 AM

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FROM: SAIGON

TO: Secretary of State

NO: 383, AUGUST 30, 6 PM

EMERGENCY

ACTION DEPARTMENT 383, INFORMATION OPERATIONAL IMMEDIATE CINCPAC 244.

EYES ONLY FOR THE SECRETARY

CINCPAC POLAD EXCLUSIVE FOR ADMIRAL FELT

DEPTEL 279.

1. I AGREE THAT GETTING THE NHUS OUT IS THE PRIME OBJECTIVE AND THAT THEY ARE "THE GREATER PART/

2. THIS SURELY CANNOT BE DONE BY WORKING THROUGH DIEM. IN FACT DIEM WILL OPPOSE IT. HE WISHES HE HAD MORE NHUS, NOT LESS.

3. THE BEST CHANCE OF DOING IT IS BY THE GENERALS TAKING OVER THE GOVERNMENT LOCK, STOCK AND BARREL.

4. AFTER THIS HAS BEEN DONE, IT CAN THEN BE DECIDED WHETHER TO PUT DIEM BACK IN AGAIN OR GO ON WITHOUT HIM. I AM RATHER INCLINED TO PUT HIM BACK, BUT I WOULD NOT FAVOR PUTTING HEAVY PRESSURE ON THE GENERALS IF THEY DONT WANT HIM.

5. MY GREATEST SINGLE DIFFICULTY IN CARRYING OUT THE INSTRUCTIONS OF LAST SUNDAY IS INERTIA. THE DAYS COME AND GO AND NOTHING HAPPENS. IT IS, OF COURSE, NATURAL FOR THE GENERALS TO WANT ASSURANCES AND THE U.S. GOVERNMENT HAS CERTAINLY BEEN PROMPT

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IN ITS REACTIONS. BUT HERE IT IS FRIDAY AND, WHILE IN ONE WAY MUCH HAS BEEN DONE, THERE IS NOT YET ENOUGH TO SHOW FOR THE HOURS WHICH WE HAVE ALL PUT IN.

6. IF I CALL ON DIEM TO DEMAND THE REMOVAL OF THE NHUS, HE WILL SURELY NOT AGREE. BUT BEFORE TURNING ME DOWN, HE WILL PRETEND TO CONSIDER IT AND INVOLVE US IN PROLONGED DELAYS. THIS WILL MAKE THE GENERALS SUSPICIOUS OF US AND ADD TO THE INERTIA.

7. SUCH A CALL BY ME WOULD LOOK TO THE NHUS LIKE AN ULTIMATUM AND WOULD RESULT IN THEIR TAKING STEPS TO THWART ANY OPERATION DEALING WITH THEM.

8. I AGREE WITH YOU THAT IF A SANCTION WERE USED, IT COULD PROVOKE AN EVEN MORE FANTASTIC REACTION. IN FACT I GREATLY DISLIKE THE IDEA OF CUTTING OFF AID IN CONNECTION WITH THE GENERALS' OPERATION AND, WHILE I THANK YOU FOR GIVING ME THE AUTHORITY TO MAKE AN ANNOUNCEMENT, I HOPE WE WILL NEVER HAVE TO USE IT.

9. IT IS POSSIBLE, AS YOU SUGGESTED [redacted] FOR THE GENERALS WHEN, AS AND IF THEIR OPERATION GETS ROLLING TO DEMAND THE REMOVAL OF THE NHUS BEFORE BRINGING THEIR OPERATION TO FRUITION. BUT I AM AFRAID THEY WILL GET TALKED OUT OF THEIR OPERATION WHICH WILL THEN DISINTEGRATE, STILL LEAVING THE NHUS IN OFFICE.

10. IF THE GENERALS' OPERATION DOES GET ROLLING, I WOULD NOT WANT TO STOP IT UNTIL THEY WERE IN FULL CONTROL. THEY COULD THEN GET RID OF THE NHUS AND DECIDE WHETHER THEY WANTED TO KEEP DIEM.

11. IT IS BETTER FOR THEM AND FOR US FOR THEM TO THROW OUT THE NHUS THAN FOR US TO GET INVOLVED IN IT.

12. I AM SURE THAT THE BEST WAY TO HANDLE THIS MATTER IS BY A TRULY VIETNAMESE MOVEMENT EVEN IF IT PUTS ME RATHER IN THE POSITION OF PUSHING A PIECE OF SPAGHETTI.

[redacted]

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[redacted]

-3- 383, AUGUST 30, 6 PM; FROM SAIGON

13. I AM CONTEMPLATING NO FURTHER TALKS WITH DIEM AT THIS TIME.

GP-1.

LODGE

JTC

NOTE: ADVANCE DELIVERY TO S/S-O AT 8:06 AM, AUGUST 30.

RELAYED TO WHITE HOUSE, OSD, CIA WITH SPECIAL CAPTIONS.

[redacted]

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